

Information for Honours level students and other final awards

Issued 6 May 2020

In our earlier [position statement](#) about learning, teaching and assessment arrangements during COVID-19 disruption, we gave a commitment to consider final award classifications in light of the exceptional circumstances affecting your studies this session.

It is important that our approach is **fair, valid and reliable** so that we maintain the academic standards of our awards, and you can be confident in the robustness of your qualification.

Our approach is comparable to other universities and in line with national guidance, although each university is responsible for making its own decisions about assessment in accordance with its regulatory framework.

Q: How will my Honours classification be decided?

A: Our normal regulatory framework applies one calculation to determine your Honours classification. This is the mean (average) mark across all SCQF Level 10 (Year 4) credits (see [Academic Regulations](#) section 17b.124ff).

For this year, we will also use a second calculation, which is the mean (average) mark across the best 80 credits at SCQF Level 10, **disregarding your lowest marks achieved in semester 2/ semester continuous /semester 3 modules.**

If this calculation indicates a higher classification than the normal one, then you will be awarded the higher classification. But it will only be used to improve your classification outcome, not to lower it (this is often called a 'no detriment' approach). **See the examples below, comparing the two calculations side by side.**

Your module leaders will have worked hard to provide assessments that are appropriate for you in the current circumstances and these may have been changed from the usual assessments for the module. Marking standards for assessments will remain at the normal level, using the same performance criteria to assign a mark and grade, so you can be confident in the academic standards of your award.

Dissertation / major project module at 40 credits will count for two instances of the same mark (or equivalent if higher number of credits).

You must submit assessments for all your final level modules and achieve at least the 40% pass mark – compensation is not available for Honours level awards.

Q: Why are you using this approach for the second calculation?

A: Modules taken in Semester 1 (which were not impacted by COVID-19) typically only represent 20 or 40 credits. Using these marks alone for the second calculation would not give a sufficient measure of your performance, so we are basing this on 80 credits taken across all semesters.

We anticipate that, in general, student performance in S2/SC/S3 modules in this session may be negatively affected by COVID-19. Therefore, the second calculation excludes the lowest 40 credits completed in S2/SC/S3 to mitigate this potential dip in performance.

However, if student performance is sustained at around the same level or improves in these later modules, this will be reflected in the normal calculation.

Q: Why not use Level 9 (Year 3) credits in the second calculation?

A: Our regulations for Honours degree classification are normally based only on Level 10 credits, whereas some universities use a combination of Level 9 and Level 10. This is because many of our students enrol on to degree level study at Level 9 (Year 3), rather than at earlier levels, and this is a transition year for them.

We consider it would be inappropriate to use Level 9 now as an indicator of performance at Honours level, because our students would not have been expecting these modules to count towards their final classification.

Q: What if I still need more time to finish my Dissertation or other modules?

A: We will continue to teach and provide supervisory support to enable you to complete your studies on the normal timescale if you are in a position to do so.

But if you need more time, you may opt to take some additional time over the summer and submit your final assessment(s) in August 2020 (or possibly later). You will need to submit a mitigating circumstances claim online to indicate you want to defer (and another claim in August if necessary). You will not be penalised for taking this option. You will need to access academic support from your supervisors / tutors before the end of June due to staff being on leave during the summer.

Q: What about the award of Distinction for other types of undergraduate award?

A: We will apply the same principles for the award of Distinction if you complete your studies and exit with an Ordinary degree, a Diploma or Certificate of Higher Education.

Our normal regulatory framework applies one calculation to determine eligibility for Distinction. This requires a mean (average) mark of 70% across all modules at the relevant level (see [Academic Regulations](#) section 17b.121).

For this session, we will also use a second calculation, which is the mean (average) mark across the best 80 credits at the relevant level, **disregarding your lowest marks achieved in S2/SC/S3 modules.**

If either calculation indicates you have met the 70% threshold, then you will be awarded Distinction classification.

Q: I'm not sure what this means for me - who should I speak to for more information?

A: You should speak to your programme leader if you have questions about your final award classification.

For other queries, please speak to your personal academic tutor or raise a query via the [Red Button](#).

Examples of applying the two Honours calculations to student mark profiles

Student Profile 1

	Normal calculation	Second calculation
S1	55	55
S1	68	68
SC (Dissertation)	56	excluded
SC (Dissertation)	56	56
S2	61	61
S2	45	excluded
Mean mark	56.83	60.00
Classification	Lower second (2:2)	Upper second (2:1)

Student Profile 2

	Normal calculation	Second calculation
S1	71	71
S1	68	68
SC (Dissertation)	61	excluded
SC (Dissertation)	61	excluded
S2	63	63
S2	70	70
Mean mark	65.67	68.00
Classification	Upper second (2:1)	Upper second (2:1)

Student Profile 3

	Normal calculation	Second calculation
S1	56	56
S1	40	40
SC (Project)	64	excluded
SC (Project)	64	excluded
SC (Dissertation)	70	70
SC (Dissertation)	70	70
Mean mark	60.67	59.00
Classification	Upper second (2:1)	Lower second (2:2)